Full Count

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by madeitsimple

Summary

There were darker, worse thoughts fighting their way to the front. Baseball is what kept them away. Buck is what kept them away. He swallowed hard and pushed back against that compelling urge to just flee. Flee from the camp, from Buck, from all those things chasing him around in his brain that he couldn't do anything about.

Keller's in left field Sturm on first Gordon on second there's the pitch and Grissom takes a swing and that ball is going back back back way out in center field Keller with the catch that's the first out in the last half of the third and still no score

"Bucky?"

A hard foul into the ground and it's ball one and two strikes the Yankees are playing not too deep and there's another swing and a miss

"John!" Buck shook him by the shoulder, his hand squeezing bone through his coat and sweater.

"What?"

"You gonna eat?"

John stared at his thin stew of turnip mash and couldn't quite recall leaving the barracks and walking to the chow hall. It must have been during the second inning, when Henderson was striking out.

There's the windup and its a low fastball that flies right over the plate Gordon swings and gets a piece of it that's a double

Buck elbowed him in the ribs. "Lukewarm stew don't taste any better, if that's what you're thinking. Meager as it is, it's food."

That was just like Buck. Reasonable down to his core. "Wouldn't call it food," John snapped. "Tastes like wet paper and paste." He pushed his plate away, sloshing liquid over the table. Across from him, DeMarco looked at him like he was crazy.

"Taste ain't really the point, is it?" Buck's voice was it's usual slow drawl that was more Texas than Wyoming but there was an edge to it. An edge that let John know Buck's patience was starting to wear thin.

"What is the point, Buck? Hmm?" He jabbed a finger into Buck's arm, hard enough that the soup in his spoon spilled over the edge and onto his pants.

Buck cut a sharp, hard glance at him out of the corner of his eye. “Surviving, John. That’s the point.”

“Surviving? Is that all we’re doing?”

“Yeah, that’s all we’re doing. No one would call this actual living, but it is surviving, Bucky. That’s what we’re all doing, and that’s what we’re all gonna do. Survive. You too.” He moved John’s plate closer and held his eyes for a long, tense moment. It was a challenge. Eat or leave the table. If he decided to leave the table John got the feeling Buck was gonna tackle him to the ground and force that plate of mash down his throat. The scene, the chaos it would cause, pulled a smile out of him. Bucky losing his ever present cool, manhandling John in front of the entire camp, his hands rough and hard all over John’s body. For the first time in a long time, John started to feel something other than total, numbing indifference. It felt dangerous and good. Like standing in a bar and having a stranger throw darts at his head. A gamble. A chance. He leaned back, just enough to make Buck think he’d swing his legs out from under the table and walk, but before he could move further, Buck’s hand came down hard on his forearm and pinned him to the table. “I said, you too.”

The struggled for a second, silently, but with enough force that the table shook. John tried to yank his arm free but Buck kept his grip like a vice, eyes blazing. That was the thing with Buck. He could go all night without saying a damn word, appear as unfazed as a blue sky, but then there was that snap and he’d rise from the table and challenge an entire table of RAF know-it-alls to a fist fight. John grinned, feeling like a madman, and relaxed under Buck’s hand.

“Fine, King Cleven. Eat, I shall.” He picked up his spoon, twirled it around and took a sloppy, full bite.

Spud Chandler stepping up to the plate now with two gone and it’s a line drive single and the Yankees get a man on base next up DiMaggio trying to keep the hitting streak alive and it’s a swing and a miss on a slippery curve ball he’s dusting dirt off his bat and there’s a fair hit ball going to get him to second

Buck was shaking him again. Both hands on his shoulders, this time through his sweater. Where had he left his jacket? Back in his bunk? It didn’t matter, he wasn’t that cold.

“John, you’re wasting the water. Come on.”

He looked down and they were in the washroom. Ice cold water

gushed over his hands, which were now blue and numb. Buck had his shirt off and water dripped down his bare, pale chest. John stared openly, leering, and tried to marshall those feelings of desire that, before, had popped up with alarming frequency. There was nothing now, no stirring in his chest and groin, no aching hardness that sprang up if Buck so much as brushed his arm. He felt like a used up husk, in some ways worse than when he thought Buck had died. At least when he thought Buck was dead, he felt grief, sadness, an all encompassing rage that kept him moving. He didn't feel anything now. Couldn't feel anything.

Ball one and strike two for Priddy the Yankees are walking out of this inning stranding three runners on base

Buck flicked ice cold water in his face, like a slap. John flinched, wiping it away with a curse.

"We gotta share a room with you," Buck said, soaping up his hands. "Maybe you don't care if you stink, but the boys sure as hell do. Soap. Water. Make the best of it, Bucky."

John took a handful of water and flung it at Buck's face, a surprising, fascinating anger bubbling up inside. "Go to hell," he snapped and in a flash, before the words were hardly out of his mouth, Buck had the back of his neck in a bruising grip. He forced John's head down into the sink.

"You want to act like a child, I'll treat you like one," Buck hissed into his ear and it sent a dark, urgent flash through his chest. John bit back a groan. Buck pushed his head under the tap and rubbed a soapy hand over his face and neck. "You think not eating, not washing, is showing these Kraut's anything?" His voice dropped a register when he was angry, went impossibly deeper and John felt it vibrate all through his torso, sending up sparks of a rare desire.

Buck kept his hold tight till John's face and hair and sweater were soaked. When he was done, he yanked him back up, mouth in a hard, thin line of disapproval. John grinned, dazed, so hard that he was certain everyone could see the outline of his erection.

"Pull yourself together," Buck said, and threw a towel at his face.

That's a long foul into the upper deck down the left field line and Keller's back up that was a sinker and it's another swing and a miss the score is still Yankees one Dodgers nothing we move to the Brooklyn half of the inning

“Don’t get crazy ideas.”

Maybe Buck had been trying to talk to him for a long time. His hand was on the back of John’s neck again, face pressed so close that there must have been an entire conversation he missed.

“Back off,” he mumbled, pushing Buck away so he stumbled into the dirt. Around them, the boys were busy digging in the garden and building what looked like a turret. He went back to staring at the barbed wire all around them, wondering.

“I mean it, Bucky. We talked about it. No one man’s gonna escape alone.”

He grinned, feeling the light breeze flap under his shirt. “Who said anything about escape?”

“We need time. You gotta be patient.” Buck’s voice was dark and low, the same usual gruff. A constant in this place where nothing ever really changed. The deep rumble of it close to his ear used to light something up inside him, but even that was dormant. John ripped his eyes away from Buck’s and stared out over the distance. He could just run. Buck would forgive him. He was fast, he’d get at least a few feet over the wire before they shot him down. He wouldn’t make it, not all the way, but it felt like a victory, just going over the walls. He imagined the barbed wire cutting into his palms, Buck shouting at him not to run.

“Relax, Buck,” he mumbled. “I’m not stupid enough to make a run for it.”

Buck just looked at him with those same, doleful eyes. “Never said you were stupid, Bucky. You’re desperate. Desperate men do desperate things.”

There were darker, worse thoughts fighting their way to the front of his brain. Baseball is what kept them away. Buck is what kept them away. He swallowed hard and pushed back against that compelling urge to just flee. Flee from the camp, from Buck, from all those things chasing him around in his brain that he couldn’t do anything about.

Charlie goes all the way around going wide and missing and then it’s a fly ball to Reccer in center field and the next pitch evens up the count and its two and two

“John!”

Buck had both his wrists twisted behind his back, stretched so tight that his shoulders had to bare the strain. With a jolt, John realized he was 10 feet closer to the perimeter than he had been before. Two guards had their rifles trained on him. Buck yanked him back towards the boys, frog marching him through the dry dirt, hissing in his ear.

John struggled to shake Buck lose but he tightened his grip, pressing his chest along John's back, pushing him forward. Buck didn't say anything, but he was close enough that John could hear his ragged breathing and feel his heart pounding against his back. "I wasn't gonna run, Buck, I swear" he tried but Buck growled so low and mean into his ear that it made John moan. "Buck," he whispered and at that, Buck shook him loose, exhaling his own sigh of desire and want.

Frenchy struck him out that's two gone and it's a line drive single and the Yankees get a man on base but that's another ball and its the bottom of the sixth with three balls and two strikes and it's a full count on DiMaggio

Buck had him by the leg. King Cleven. Stumpity, stumpity stump. John wrapped his arm around Buck's ankle, holding his shin in one hand while kicking at his chest. "Get off of me," he shouted while Buck hardly said a word. They jostled around in the dirt, doing nothing more than play fighting until finally, inevitably, Buck hauled off and punched him in the nose. He collapsed in the dirt, the pain radiating down his face and through his skull, a brilliant, cleansing feeling that made everything sparkle and shine. He exhaled, rolling onto his side.

"John," Buck tried to help him up but he slapped his hand away. The Krauts started barking around them and sirens blared through the late morning air. Next to him, Buck exclaimed that something had happened. He staggered to his feet, still unsteady but smiling again. It was a relief, that rough clarity of a punch. He wanted it again.

DeMarco pushed him towards the barracks and he cast a glance back over his shoulder. Buck stalked towards him, face relaxed but stride adamant. The boys had scattered, rushing into their own barracks as the guards waived and pointed their rifles. Buck closed the distance between them and pushed John into and through the doorway of their barracks. Their room was all the way down towards the end, but Buck grabbed his elbow and tossed him through the open door of the library, slamming it shut behind him.

He couldn't help the slow, wild grin spreading across his face. "I felt

that," he said. "Square across the beak." He bounced up and down on his heels, the adrenaline of the fight and the news of boots on the ground in Europe humming through his veins. "Come on, one more Buck. One more right across the kisser." He put his hands up like a boxer, daring Buck to take another swing. "I won't even try to hit you back."

Buck just shook his head, those long, gangly arms square on his hips. "I'm not gonna hurt you, Bucky."

"You won't be hurting me, come on. Take a swing." The words sparked an odd, crushing sense of deja vu and he thought of Biddick, with his lopsided grin and surly, Irish mouth. The memory caught in his throat, making it hard to swallow. "Come on! One swing." He was desperate to feel it again, the vivid colors and sense of being here and alive that only seemed to happen when someone, anyone, connected flesh to bone. "Just do it, Buck. Please. I swear, I don't feel anything."

That was the problem, the real one. Not just that he had Buck within arms reach at all times but could hardly ever touch him. Not that they were trapped inside a loop of never ending monotony without booze or baseball. It wasn't the violence that played out nightly in his dreams. He couldn't feel any of it, not any more. "Do it!" he screamed so loud the entire row must have heard.

Buck just stood there, looking at him with such agony that it brought out a hot, furious rage. "I don't want pity, Buck. I'm just asking for a good fight." Buck didn't move. John crossed the room and shoved him towards the closed door. "Come on. You wanted to punch me. Go ahead, do it again."

"Bucky, don't," he whispered, and John pushed him again, till he was flush against the door. He grabbed him by the thin cloth of his sweaty undershirt, feeling the sun-baked heat of Buck's skin.

"Do it," John barked into his face. "Do it."

There was a hard flinch across Buck's face and his lips curled in annoyance.

And there, again, the snap.

Before John knew what was happening Buck grabbed his shirt and whirled him around, shoving him face first into the door, hands twisted behind his back. Buck covered him, his long, lanky frame pressed tight between his legs.

“You done playing around?” Buck growled into his ear, the gravel sound of his voice sending shivers down John’s back. “You think you’re the only one having a hard time here? Acting like a fool, running towards the perimeter like you don’t care you who catches you. Goddamn, Bucky.” There wasn’t a breath of space between them, and Buck’s voice was hot and wet against the side of John’s face. “You think this isn’t killing me too?”

He groaned, feeling Buck press along his back.

“Worrying me half to death, like I don't have enough to think about.” Buck shoved his legs further apart and pressed the hard front of his pants deliberately along John’s backside.

“Buck,” he gasped.

Buck tightened his grip on John’s arms, pinning them behind his back. John had stopped struggling to get away, now he squirmed, rocking back into Buck, desperate for friction.

“Oh god,” Buck moaned. He fumbled his free hand to the front of John’s trousers, undid the button and worked the zipper down. “John,” he whispered, into his neck. “John.”

“Do it, Buck. Please. Just do something.”

Buck stuck a hand down his pants, hot fingers plunged into the humid depths of his shorts and curled around his aching cock. The first touch was excruciating, and John keened against his will, his entire body rocking back into the touch. Buck let go of his arms, and wrapped one arm around his chest, and kept the other around his dick.

“Easy, darling,” Buck whispered and began to stroke him, fast and hard.

“Buck, Buck,” John didn’t seem to have any other words left as Buck’s palm slid quickly over him, from the base to the tip, squeezing in firm, short strokes. It had been months and months of wanting and the pleasure of it ran through him like an electric current, from the tips of his toes to his hair. He groaned again, grabbing at the hand Buck had around his chest, pushing his hips into Buck’s fist.

“That feel good?” Buck licked his neck, tasting days of sweat and dirt. He mouthed at the thick vein there and sucked a bruise under John’s jaw, his hand moving in rapid, silent strokes.

John was gasping now, pushing into the touch, wanting, needing more. He gripped Buck's hand and made some kind of plea, nothing with words that he could understand, but Buck did. Buck sped up his strokes, murmuring his name softly, till John was crying with pleasure.

"Please, oh god, just please," John whispered, ragged and tearful. He was lost in the sensation of Buck wrapped all around him, squeezing him from all sides.

They were both panting into each other, sweat dripped down his neck and into Buck's mouth, the cool metal of his dog tags slapped against his shoulder. He arched back into Buck, feeling the hard line of his erection pressed against his leg. He moaned at the thought of it, and Buck tightened his grip, stroking him furiously, murmuring his name, til John he came with a choked, strangled cry.

"That's it, darling. That's it."

John slumped against the door, head resting against the wood frame as Buck teased the tips of his fingers down his cock, easing out the last waves of orgasm. He whispered nonsense into John's neck, and rocked against him.

John lost himself for a few moments, not to the Yankees playing ball in his head, but to the smell of Buck against him, the feel of his dick pressed against his thigh, the soft, slow stroke of his hand.

"Buck," he mumbled and reached down and entwined their hands.

From behind him, Buck undid his zipper and guided John's hand to his dick. The angle was awkward and when John tried to turn, Buck pushed him back. "No, stay like this."

He was hot and hard, but the skin was luxuriously soft and John moaned at the feel of it. It made something hitch in Buck's throat. "I'm not gonna last long," Buck gasped. It was a furious pace, likely to chafe, but Buck didn't seem to mind. He bit along the side of John's neck, using both their hands to pump himself in long, hard strokes. John's wrist ached at the pressure and odd angle but he let Buck guide their movements, giving over every last bit control he had. He felt Buck's dizzying breath around him, heard the short whimpers of desire until finally, Buck stilled and squeezed their hands together, coming with a silent, choked off sob.

"John," he whispered, collapsing into him so that only the door was

holding them up. “John.”

Buck kept him there, pinned to the door, till their breathing evened out and hearts didn’t beat so wild. He untangled their hands and wiped them along his pants leg but didn’t move. John ran a hand along Buck’s bare forearm, feeling the light hairs stand up at the touch.

“I can see you’re giving up on me, Bucky,” he said finally. “I can feel you slipping away.”

John didn’t protest or deny. In the past few months, he had drifted farther and farther from the camp.

“I’m telling you one thing and you better be listening,” Bucky said into his hair. “If you don’t make it out, I don’t make it out. You hear me, John Egan? We get through this thing and we do it together.”

He tightened his hold and John curled his hand around Buck’s wrist, feeling the heat and sweat of his skin under his fingers. It was alive, thrumming with life. John turned in his arms and pressed their mouths together in a long, desperate kiss. Buck kissed him back, just as hard and fierce.

“We’ll get out. We will.”

For the first time in a long time, John thought maybe, maybe they would.

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